GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3871
ANSWERED ON:09.08.2017
Cultivation near Railway Tracks
Choudhary Col. (Retd) Sona Ram

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that huge wasteland is available along the railway tracks throughout the length and breadth of the country;

(b) if so, whether there are any plans to use such land for cultivation of local crops and generation of solar/wind energy;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN)

(a) to (d): Indian Railways have about 51165 hectares of vacant land (not waste land) out of total land of 472155 hectares, which is mostly in the form of narrow strips along the tracks. The fifteen (15) metre width of this strip from toe of the embankment comes under safety zone, as most of the electrical, signalling and other installations required for operation of trains lie in this zone, and this width is also used for servicing and maintenance of track, bridges and other railway infrastructure. The vacant land is also utilized for execution of various infrastructural projects for meeting future growth needs of Railways which include projects like doubling/tripling and traffic facilities works, etc. Railways' operations also necessarily require development of ancillary logistic support/infrastructure such as bulk oil installations & oil depots, steel yards, concrete sleeper plants, coal dumps, connectivity to private sidings, connectivity to ports and other infrastructure, commercial plots, vending stalls, etc. for which land is leased/licensed. The vacant land, which is not required by Railways for its immediate operational needs, is utilized in the interim period for commercial development through Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA), wherever feasible, in order to mobilize additional financial resources.

Railways license its vacant land to their Group 'C' employees under Grow More Food (GMF) scheme for cultivation of local crops.

Railways has also planned to utilize vacant Railway land where commercial development is not feasible for Railways' captive energy sources, such as solar/wind energy.

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